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A

SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE

HONORABLE COUNCIL,

AND THE HONORABLE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OF THE

STATE

OF

MASSACHUSETTS-BAY,

IN

NEW-ENGLAND,

AT

BOSTON,

May 26, 1779.

BEING THE ANNIVERSARY FOR THE ELECTION OF THE HONORABLE COUNCIL.

By SAMUEL STILLMAN, A. M.

Paſtor of the Firſt Baptiſt Church in Boston.

BOSTON, NEW-ENGLAND:
Printed by T. and J. FLEET, in Cornhill,
And J. GILL, in Court-Street,
MDCCLXXIX.

State of MASSACHUSETTS-BAY,

In the House of REPRESENTATIVES,
May 26, 1779.

ON Motion, *Ordered*, That the Honorable General *Warren*, Mr. *Thaxter* and Mr. *Davis* of Boston, be a Committee to return the Thanks of this House to the Rev. Mr. *Stillman*, for his Sermon delivered this Day before the two Houses, and to request a Copy of the same for the Press.

Extract from the Minutes,

Samuel Freeman, Clerk.

AN ELECTION SERMON.

MATT. XXII. 21.

—Then ſaith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæſar, the things that are Cæſars: and unto God, the things that are Gods.

THE Phariſees, who, in appearance, were the ſtricteſt religious ſect among the Jews, obſerving the growing reputation of the Son of God, and finding that he had eclipſed their glory, took counſel how they might entangle him in his talk. A conduct this that is repugnant to every principle of genuine religion. But thoſe men who are determined upon their own aggrandizement, are ſeldom ſcrupulous about the means of obtaining it. Hence theſe ambitious religioniſts ſent out to him their diſciples, with the Herodians, men fit for their purpoſe, *ſaying*, in the language of hypocriſy and inſult, *Maſter, we know that thou art true, and teacheſt*

the

the way of God in truth, neither careſt thou for any man: for thou regardeſt not the perſon of men. Tell us therefore, what thinkeſt thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæſar, or not?

THE Jews entertained an extreme averſion to the Gentiles, and could not be brought to ſubmit to a heathen magiſtrate but with great reluctance, and through abſolute neceſſity.

THESE Phariſees therefore, judging of our bleſſed Lord by their own ſentiments and feelings, ſuppoſed that by this queſtion, they ſhould extort ſomething from him derogatory to Cæſar's honor; or that would ſubject him to an impeachment as an enemy to the Roman government. But he taketh the wiſe in their own craftineſs—*Shew me*, ſaid he, *the tribute money. And they brought him a penny. And he ſaith unto them, whoſe is this image and ſuperſcription? They ſay unto him Cæſars. Then ſaith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæſar, the things that are Cæſars: and unto God, the things that are Gods.*—Upon their being thus defeated in their infamous attempt, they marvelled, and went their way to report to their maſters their humiliating diſappointment: for Chriſt had ſaid nothing in his reply to them, which Cæſar himſelf would not approve.

IT is a matter of very little conſequence to us on this occaſion, which of the Cæſars was on the throne at the time referred to in the text; becauſe the

the duties here inculcated are not affected by this circumſtance. The people were taught by Chriſt to render ſuch obedience to Cæſar, or to the civil magiſtrate, as would be conſiſtent with the natural and the civil rights of men, and the obligations they were under to the eternal God. It is unreaſonable to ſuppoſe that he meant to inculcate any other ſubjection than this. Beſides, his addreſs is properly guarded. "Render therefore to Cæſar, *the things that are Cæſars.*" That is, thoſe things which he may lawfully claim. What theſe were our Lord does not aſcertain. Nor is it neceſſary that we ſhould, as they relate to Cæſar and his ſubjects. I ſhall therefore proceed to apply this ſacred paſſage to ourſelves in our preſent ſituation, by conſidering,

I. WHAT thoſe duties are which the people owe to the civil magiſtrate.

II. THE duties of the magiſtrate to the people.

And then,

III. ENDEAVOR to draw the line between the things that belong to Cæſar, and theſe things that belong to God.

I. WE are firſt to enquire what thoſe duties are which the people owe to the civil magiſtrate?

I apprehend that this queſtion implies another which is previouſly neceſſary to be determined, viz. How came the men whom we call magiſtrates, with any power at all over the people?

Were

Were they born to govern? Have they an higher original than other men? Or, do they claim the ſovereignty *jure divino?*

THE time has been when the divine right of kings ſounded from the pulpit and the preſs; and when the ſacred name of religion was brought in, to ſanctify the moſt horrid ſyſtems of deſpotiſm and cruelty.—But bleſſed be God, we live in a more happy *æra*, in which the great principles of liberty are better underſtood. With us it is a *firſt* and a *fundamental* principle, *that God made all men equal.*

"NOTHING is more evident, ſays a great writer, than that creatures of the ſame ſpecies and rank, promiſcuouſly born to all the ſame advantages of nature, and the uſe of the ſame faculties, ſhould alſo be equal one amongſt another without ſubordination or ſubjection, unleſs the Lord and maſter of them all ſhould, by any manifeſt declaration of his will, ſet one above another, and confer on him, by an evident and clear appointment, an undoubted right to dominion and ſovereignty." *

UNTIL ſuch a declaration of the divine will ſhall be produced, we ought firmly to maintain the *natural equality* of all men.

AND as they are *equal*, ſo they are likewiſe in a ſtate of *entire freedom.* Whatever they poſſeſs is their own; to be diſpoſed of ſolely agreeable

to

* Locke.

to their own will. None have a right to claim any part of their property, to disturb them in their possessions, or to demand subjection in any degree whatever, while they act consistent with the law of nature. He who attempts to do either, is an usurper, puts himself into a state of war, and may be opposed as a common highwayman.

If we admit the truth of these principles, we come by an easy transition to the foundation of civil society, viz. *The consent of the people.* For if men are equal by nature, it must depend entirely upon themselves, whether they will continue in their natural condition, or exchange it for a state of civil government. Consequently the sovereignty resides originally in the people.

As their leaving a state of nature for a state of civil society, is a matter of their own choice, so they are equally free to adopt that form of government which appears to them the most eligible, or the best calculated to promote the happiness of themselves and of their posterity.

Which is the best form of civil government? is a question of the first magnitude to any people; and particularly to us, who have lately considered this weighty matter; and who expect, at some future period, finally to determine it.—May that God by whom all human events are controled, inspire my fellow-citizens with that wisdom that shall be profitable to direct!

FROM the premiſes, the following is a natural concluſion—*That the authority of the civil magiſtrate is, under God, derived from the people.*

IN order therefore to determine with accuracy, what the powers of the civil magiſtrate are, and alſo the duties that the people owe him, we muſt have recourſe to the conſtitution; by which, in all good governments, the authority of the former, and the rights of the latter are determined with preciſion.

THAT it ſhould be ſo, is a dictate of common ſenſe. For upon a ſuppoſition of the contrary, how ſhall rulers or ſubjects determine their reſpective obligations?

FROM hence ariſes, in my view, the indiſpenſable neceſſity of a BILL OF RIGHTS, drawn up in the moſt explicit language, previouſly to the ratification of a conſtitution of government; which ſhould contain its fundamental principles, and which no perſon in the ſtate, however dignified, ſhould dare to violate but at his peril.

As we are at preſent without a fixed form of government, I ſhall treat the ſubject rather according to my wiſhes, than the preſent ſtate of things. For the conſtitution ought at leaſt to have a general exiſtence in idea, before the reciprocal duties of magiſtrates and people can be aſcertained.

SOME of thoſe principles which, I apprehend, may be called *fundamental*, have been mentioned; to which I beg leave to ſubjoin,

THAT the great end for which men enter into a ſtate of civil ſociety, is *their own advantage.*

That civil rulers, as they derive their authority from the people, ſo they are accountable to them for the uſe they make of it—

That elections ought to be *free* and *frequent*—

That repreſentation ſhould be as equal as poſſible—

That as all men are equal by nature, ſo when they enter into a ſtate of civil government, they are entitled *preciſely* to the ſame rights and privileges; or to an *equal degree* of political happineſs—

That ſome of the natural rights of mankind are unalienable, and ſubject to no control but that of the Deity. Such are the SACRED RIGHTS of CONSCIENCE. Which in a ſtate of nature, and of civil ſociety are exactly the ſame. They can neither be parted with nor controled, by any human authority whatever.

Attempts of this kind have been repeatedly made by an ambitious clergy, aſſiſted by rulers of deſpotic principles. The conſequence of which has been, that crowds of the beſt members of ſociety have been reduced to this dreadful alternative, either to offend God and violate the dictates of their own minds, or to die at a ſtake.—

That the right of trial by jury ought to be perpetual—

That no man's property can, of right, be taken from him without his conſent, given either in perſon, or by his repreſentative—

That no laws are obligatory on the people, but thoſe that have obtained a like conſent. Nor are ſuch laws of any force, if, proceeding from a corrupt majority of the legiſlature, they are incompatible with the fundamental principles of the government, and tend to ſubvert it.

"ALL human things have an end, ſays a ſenſible writer, the ſtate we are ſpeaking of (meaning Great-Britain) will loſe its liberty, will periſh. Have not Rome, Sparta and Carthage periſhed? It will periſh when the legiſlative power ſhall be more corrupt than the executive."†

LET us caſt our eye to the land of our fathers, to the kingdom from whence we deſcended, and we ſhall find that ſhe now totters on the brink of a moſt dangerous precipice. And that ſhe hath been brought into her preſent deplorable ſituation by a *venal majority*.

SOME of that people foreſaw their cataſtrophe approaching with haſty ſtrides; they petitioned and remonſtrated. And ſeveral excellent things were publiſhed in vindication of their conſtitution and their injured rights: but all was in vain.

THE

† Monteſquieu.

THE very men who were appointed the guardians and *conservators* of the rights of the people, have dismembred the Empire; and by repeated acts of injustice and oppression, have forced from the bosom of their parent country, millions of Americans, who might have been drawn by a *hair*, but were not to be driven by all the *thunder* of Britain.

A few soft words would have fixed them in her interest, and have turned away that wrath which her cruel conduct had inkindled. The sameness of religion, of language and of manners, together with interest, that powerful motive, and a recollection of that reciprocation of kind offices which had long prevailed, would have held America in closest friendship with Great Britain, had she not "governed too much."

IT can afford the inhabitants of that once happy country, no consolation in their present threatning condition, that it hath been brought on with all the *formality of law*. Rather this circumstance adds to the calamity, seeing the men who should have saved them, have betrayed them.

WHERE is now the boasted freedom of the British government? Bribery and corruption, seem nearly to have accomplished the prediction of the great Montesquieu. Nor is such an event to be wondred at, while we reflect on the

the inequality* of their repreſentation, and the baſe methods that are uſed in their elections of members of the houſe of Commons, together with the length of time they are ſuffered to continue in their places.

"IF they are choſen for a long term, by a part only of the ſtate; and if during that term they are ſubject to no control from their conſtituents; the very idea of liberty will be loſt, and the power of chuſing in conſtituents becomes nothing but a power lodged in a *few*, to chuſe, at certain periods, a body of *Maſters* for themſelves and for the reſt of the community. And if a ſtate is ſo ſunk that the body of its repreſentatives are elected by a handful of the meaneſt perſons in it, whoſe votes are always paid for;† and if alſo there is a higher will on which even theſe mock repreſentatives themſelves depend, and that directs their voices: In theſe circumſtances, it will be an abuſe of language to ſay that the ſtate poſſeſſes liberty."——This appears to be a juſt deſcription of the preſent ſtate of the country, from which we deſcended.

SUCH

* Great-Britain, conſiſting of near ſix millions of inhabitants, 5723 perſons, moſt of them of the loweſt of the people, elect one half of the Houſe of Commons; and 364 votes chuſe a ninth part. This may be ſeen diſtinctly made out in the *Political Diſquiſitions*, Vol. 1. Book 2. Ch. 4.—Dr. Price.

† They who *buy* their *places* will *ſell* the *people*, for they mean to make ſomething by the *bargain*.

SUCH an inſtance affords us many important leſſons; and calls upon us to guard as much as poſſible, in *our beginning*, againſt the corruption of human nature. We ſhould leave nothing to human virtue, that can be provided for by law or the conſtitution. The more we truſt in the hands of any man, the more we try his virtue, which, at ſome fatal hour, may yield to a temptation; and the people diſcover their error, when it is too late to prevent the miſchief.

UPON the truth of the principles advanced, I obſerve, That the authority of the magiſtrate is derived from the people by conſent—that it is limited and ſubordinate—and that ſo long as he exerciſes the power with which he is veſted according to the original compact, the people owe him *reverence*, *obedience* and *ſupport*.

INSPIRATION teaches us to *give honor to whom honor, fear to whom fear.*

WHEN any men are taken from the common rank of citizens, and are entruſted with the powers of government, they are by that act ennobled. Their election implies their perſonal merit, and is a public declaration of it. For it is taken for granted, that the people have been influenced in their choice by worthineſs of character, and not by family-connections, or other baſe motives. They are therefore intitled to a

certain

certain degree of reſpect from their conſtituents; who, while they pay them due reverence, will feel it reflected upon themſelves, becauſe they bear their commiſſion. Both intereſt and duty oblige them to reverence the powers that be. It is their duty in conſequence of their own appointment. And their intereſt, becauſe the good of the community depends much upon it. For as far as any of the citizens unjuſtly depreciate the merit of rulers, ſo far they leſſen the energy of government, and put it out of their power to promote the public good.

WITH reverence to the perſon of the magiſtrate, we connect *obedience to his authority*: Such obedience as is compatible with the principles already laid down. The term *government* implies this *ſubordination*, which is eſſential to its very exiſtence.

WHEN therefore any perſons riſe in oppoſition to ſuch authority, they are guilty of a moſt daring offence againſt the State; becauſe, as far as it prevails, it tends to deſtroy the ſocial compact, and to introduce confuſion and every evil work. Conſequently,

IT is the duty of the people to *ſupport the magiſtrate, in the due execution of the laws, againſt ſuch*, and *all other offenders*. To chuſe men to office, and not to ſupport them in the execution of it, is too great an abſurdity, one would think, to find any abettors.

THERE

THERE is alſo a *pecuniary ſupport* which the magiſtrate hath a right to receive from his conſtituents. It is moſt reaſonable that thoſe perſons whoſe time and abilities are devoted to the ſervice of their country, ſhould be amply provided for while they are thus engaged. The compenſation ſhould be adequate to the ſervices they render the State. Let it be ſufficient, but not redundant.

WHILE ſpeaking of that ſupport which the ſervants of government are entitled to, I beg leave to mention thoſe brave men of every rank who compoſe our army. They have ſtepped forth in the hour of danger, have exchanged domeſtic eaſe and happineſs for the hardſhips of the camp,—have repeatedly fought; and many of them have bled in the cauſe of their country. Of their importance no man can be ignorant.

WITH deference to this venerable aſſembly, I am conſtrained to obſerve, That our firſt attention is due to them; becauſe, under God, they have been, now are, and we truſt will be our defence. For them let us make the moſt ample proviſion, and reſt aſſured of their moſt vigorous exertions, to defend and ſave their country.

BUT, it is time to paſs to the

II. CONSIDERATION of the duties of the magiſtrate to the people.

As a free government is founded in compact, the parties concerned in it are conſequently laid under mutual obligations. Theſe, it hath been ſaid, are determined by the conſtitution. If ſo, it follows, that the rulers of the people ought to make themſelves thoroughly acquainted with it, together with the different laws of the State. Therefore, they ſhould be men of leiſure and abilities, whether they are called to act in a legiſlative, or executive department.

It is taken for granted, that the rulers of the people will not forget the ſource of their power, nor the deſign of their appointment to office —— that they have no authority but what they derived from the people; who, from a confidence in them, that reflects great honor on them, have put it into their hands, with this ſole view,—That they might thereby promote the good of the community.

Whether this great end is accompliſhed by the exerciſe of the authority of civil rulers, the people are to judge; with whom the powers of government originate, and who muſt know the end for which they entruſted them in the hands of any of their fellow-citizens. This right of judging of their conduct, implies, that it lies with them either to *cenſure* or *approve* it.

Theſe conſiderations are happily calculated to prevent the abuſe of power, which has already

happened

happened in repeated instances. And of which there ever will be danger, while mankind remain in their present state of corruption.

A SPIRIT of ambition, which is natural to man, tends to tyranny; and an undue attachment to personal interest, may issue in fraud; or in an accumulation of offices, which in their own nature are incompatible with each other; and which no man, let his abilities be what they may, can discharge with honor to himself, and advantage to his country.

A FAITHFUL ruler will consider himself as a trustee of the public, and that he is accountable both to God and to the people for his behaviour in his office. He will therefore be very careful not to involve himself in more public business, than he can perform with fidelity.

IT would have a happy tendency to render the duty of the magistrate easy and successful, were he to cultivate an intimate acquaintance, with the genius and tempers of the people over whom he presides. By such an acquisition, if prudent, he would be capable of pursuing a mode of conduct, that would not fail of gaining him the affections and confidence of his subjects. The importance of which is self-evident.

HE *who ruleth over men*, says David, *must be just ruling in the fear of God*. In his exalted station, he should go before the people as an example

example of every moral virtue; and as a hearty friend of that conſtitution of government which he hath ſworn to protect. To the meaneſt of the people he ſhould act the part of a political father, by ſecuring to them the full enjoyment of life, liberty and property. To him they are to look that juſtice is not delayed, nor the laws executed with partiality. But that all thoſe who united in cloathing him with the authority of the magiſtrate, may uninterruptedly enjoy that *equal liberty*, for the ſecurity of which they entered into a ſtate of civil ſociety. Thus will he be *as the light of the morning when the ſun riſeth, even a morning without clouds.*

THERE are many things that belong to this part of the ſubject. Such as, That the people have a right to expect that the honorable their rulers, will by all lawful means in their power encourage agriculture and commerce—endeavor to *ſuppreſs vice and immorality*,*—lend all neceſſary

* Had this ſentence been duly attended to at the time the ſermon was delivered, the following objection, which ſome of my friends have made, viz. "That upon the principles contained in the ſermon, the civil magiſtrate ought not to exerciſe his authority to ſuppreſs acts of immorality;" I ſay, had what is ſaid above been properly obſerved, this objection had been ſuperſeded. Immoral actions properly come under the cognizance of civil rulers, who are the guardians of the peace of ſociety. But then I beg leave to obſerve in the words of Biſhop Warburton, "That the magiſtrate puniſhes no bad actions, as ſins or offences *againſt God*, but only as crimes injurious to, or having a malignant influence on ſociety." In this view of the matter he keeps within the line of his own department.

ceſſary aſſiſtance to our ſchools and college; it being a matter of high political importance, that knowledge ſhould be diffuſed through the State, amongſt all ranks of men. The propagation of literature is connected with the ſecurity of freedom. Ignorance in politicks as well as in religion, is fatal in its tendency.

THESE ſubjects have been often conſidered with great ability and addreſs, on theſe anniverſaries. Therefore I forbear to enlarge on them, and reſerve the remainder of my time for the conſideration of a point of peculiar delicacy and of the greateſt importance to the happineſs of my country, viz.

III. To attempt to draw the line between the things that belong to Cæſar, and thoſe things that belong to God.

To this enquiry I am naturally led by the text. *Render therefore to Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's: and unto God the things that are God's.* It is moſt evident in this paſſage, that there are ſome things which Cæſar, or the magiſtrate, cannot of right demand, nor the people yield. The addreſs has it's limits. To determine what theſe are, was never more neceſſary to the people of theſe UNITED STATES, than it is at preſent. We are engaged in a moſt important conteſt; not for POWER, but FREEDOM. We mean not to change our maſters, but to ſecure to ourſelves, and to generations yet unborn,

the perpetual enjoyment of civil and religious liberty, in their fulleſt extent.

IT becomes us therefore to ſettle this moſt weighty matter in our different forms of government, in ſuch a manner, that no occaſion may be left in future, for the violation of the all-important rights of conſcience.

—"I eſteem it, ſays the juſtly celebrated Mr. Locke, above all things, neceſſary to diſtinguiſh exactly the buſineſs of civil government from that of religion, and to ſettle the juſt bounds that lie between the one and the other. If this be not done, there can be no end put to the controverſies that will be always ariſing between thoſe that have, or at leaſt pretend to have, on the one ſide, a concernment for the intereſt of men's ſouls, and on the other ſide, a care of the common wealth.

"THE common wealth ſeems to me to be a ſociety of men conſtituted only for the procuring, preſerving, and advancing their own *civil intereſts.*

"CIVIL *intereſts* I call life, liberty and health—and the poſſeſſion of outward things, ſuch as money, lands, houſes, furniture, and the like.—

"Now that the whole juriſdiction of the magiſtrate reaches only to theſe civil concernments, and that all civil power, right and dominion, is

bounded

bounded and confined to the only care of promoting these things; and that it neither can nor ought in any manner to be extended to the salvation of souls, these following considerations seem to me abundantly to demonstrate,

"FIRST, Because the care of souls is not committed to the civil magistrate any more than to other men. It is not committed to him, I say, by God; because it appears not that God has ever given any such authority to one man over another, as to compel any one to his religion. Nor can any such power be vested in the magistrate by the *consent of the people*; because no man can so far abandon the care of his own salvation, as blindly to leave it to the choice of any other, whether prince or subject, to prescribe to him what faith or worship he shall embrace. Nor no man can, if he would, conform his faith to the dictates of another. All the life and power of true religion consists in the inward and full persuasion of the mind; and faith is not faith without believing.——

"IN *the second place*, The care of souls cannot belong to the civil magistrate, because his power consists only in outward force; but true and saving religion consists in the inward persuasion of the mind, without which nothing can be acceptable to God. And such is the nature of the understanding, that it cannot be compelled to any thing by outward force.——

IN

"In *the third place*, The care of the ſalvation of men's ſouls cannot belong to the civil magiſtrate; becauſe, though the rigour of laws and the force of penalties were capable to convince and change men's minds, yet would not that help at all to the ſalvation of their ſouls. For, there being but one truth, one way to Heaven; what hope is there that more men would be led into it, if they had no other rule to follow but the religion of the court, and were put under the neceſſity to quit the light of their own reaſon, to oppoſe the dictates of their own conſciences, and blindly reſign up themſelves to the will of their governors, and to the religion which either ignorance, ambition or ſuperſtition had chanced to eſtabliſh in the countries where they were born? In the variety and contradiction of opinions in religion, wherein the princes of the world are as much divided as in their ſecular intereſts, the narrow way would be much ſtraitened; one country alone would be in the right, and all the reſt of the world put under an obligation of following their princes in the ways that lead to deſtruction: And what heightens the abſurdity, and very ill ſuits the notion of a Deity, men would owe their eternal happineſs or miſery to the places of their nativity.

"These conſiderations, to omit many others that might have been urged to the ſame purpoſe, ſeem to me ſufficient to conclude that all the power of civil government relates only to men's civil intereſts, is confined to the care of the things

things of this world, and hath nothing to do with the world to come." *

THESE ſentiments, I humbly conceive, do honor to their author, and diſcover a true greatneſs and liberality of mind; and are calculated properly to limit the power of civil rulers, and to ſecure to every man the ineſtimable right of private judgment.

THEY are alſo perfectly agreeable to a fundamental principle of government, which we univerſally admit. We ſay, *That the power of the civil magiſtrate is derived from the people.* If ſo, it follows that he can neither have *more*, nor *any other kind of power* than they had to give.

THE power which the people commit into the hands of the magiſtrate, is wholly confined to the things of this world. Other power than this they have not. They have not the leaſt authority over the conſciences of one another, nor over their own conſciences ſo as to alienate them, or ſubject them to the controul of the civil magiſtrate in matters of religion, in which every man is *perſonally* intereſted; and concerning which every man ought to be fully perſuaded in his own mind, and to follow it's dictates at all hazards, becauſe he is to *account for himſelf* at the judgment ſeat of Chriſt.

SEEING then that the people have no power that they can commit into the hands of the magiſtrate, but that which relates to the good of civil ſociety, it follows that the magiſtrate can have no other, becauſe he derives his authority from the people. Such as the power of the people is, ſuch muſt be the power of the magiſtrate.

To theſe obſervations I beg leave to add, that *the kingdom of Chriſt is not of this world.* By his kingdom we mean his church, which is altogether ſpiritual. Its origin, government and preſervation are entirely of him, who hath upon his veſture and upon his thigh written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

THE doctrines that we are to believe, the duties that we are to perform, the officers who are to ſerve in this kingdom, and the laws by which all its ſubjects are to be governed, we become acquainted with by the oracles of God, which are the chriſtians infallible directory: To which he is bound to yield obedience, at the riſque of his reputation and life.

THEY who enter into this kingdom do it voluntarily, with a deſign of promoting their ſpiritual intereſts. Civil affairs they reſign to the care of the magiſtrate, but the ſalvation of their ſouls they ſeek in the kingdom of Chriſt.

THIS kingdom does not in any reſpects interfere with civil government; rather tends to promote its peace and happineſs, becauſe its ſubjects are taught to obey magiſtracy, and to *lead peaceable and quiet lives in all godlineſs and honeſty.*

THE ſubjects of the kingdom of Chriſt, claim no exemption from the juſt authority of the magiſtrate, by virtue of their relation to it. Rather they yield a ready and chearful obedience, not *only for wrath, but alſo for conſcience ſake.* And ſhould any of them violate the laws of the ſtate, they are to be puniſhed as other men.

THEY exerciſe no *ſecular* power, they inflict no *temporal* penalties upon the perſons of one another. All their puniſhments are *ſpiritual.* Their *weapons are not carnal, but mighty through God.* They uſe no other force than that of reaſon and argument to reclaim delinquents; nor are ſuch perſons to be puniſhed for continuing incorrigible, in any other way than by rebuke, or excluſion.

THEY pretend not to exerciſe their ſpiritual authority over any perſons, who have not joined themſelves to them of their own accord. *What have I to do,* ſays Paul, *to judge them alſo who are without? do ye not judge them who are within?*

THE ſubjects of this kingdom are bound by no laws in matters of religion, but ſuch as they receive

receive from Chriſt, who is the only lawgiver and head of his church. All human laws in this reſpect are inadmiſſible, as being unneceſſary, and as implying a groſs reflection on our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as though he was either unable, or unwilling to provide for his own intereſt in the world. Nor will he ſtand by an idle ſpectator, of the many encroachments that have been made on his ſacred prerogative, by the powers of the world.

SHOULD the moſt dignified civil ruler become a member of his church, or a ſubject of his ſpiritual kingdom, he cannot carry the leaſt degree of his *civil* power into it. In the church he is as any other member of it, entitled to the ſame ſpiritual privileges, and bound by the ſame laws. The authority he has derived from the ſtate, can by no means be extended to the kingdom of Chriſt, becauſe Chriſt is the only ſource of that power, that is to be exerciſed in it.

IT may be ſaid, That religion is of importance to the good of civil ſociety, therefore the magiſtrate ought to encourage it under this idea.

IT is readily acknowledged, that the intrinſic excellence and beneficial effects of true religion are ſuch, that *every man* who is favored with the chriſtian revelation, ought to befriend it. It has the *promiſe of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.* And there are many ways in which the civil magiſtrate may encourage religion,

in a perfect agreement with the nature of the kingdom of Christ, and the rights of conſcience.

As a *man* he is *perſonally* intereſted in it. His everlaſting ſalvation is at ſtake. Therefore he ſhould ſearch the ſcriptures for himſelf, and follow them wherever they lead him. This right he hath in common with every other citizen.

As the *head of a family* he ſhould act as a prieſt in his own houſe, by endeavoring to bring up his children in the nurture, and admonition of the Lord.

As a *magiſtrate* he ſhould be as a nurſing father to the church of Chriſt, by protecting all the peaceable members of it from injury on account of religion; and by ſecuring to them the uninterrupted enjoyment of equal religious liberty. The authority by which he acts he derives alike from *all the people*, conſequently he ſhould exerciſe that authority *equally* for the benefit of *all*, without any reſpect to their different religious principles. They have an undoubted right to demand it.

UNION in the ſtate is of abſolute neceſſity to its happineſs. This the magiſtrate will ſtudy to promote. And this he may reaſonably expect upon the plan propoſed, of a *juſt and equal treatment of all the citizens.*

FOR though christians may contend amongst themselves about their religious differences, they will all unite to promote the good of the community, because it is their interest, so long as they all enjoy the blessings of a free, and equal administration of government.

ON the other hand, if the magistrate destroys the equality of the subjects of the state on account of religion, he violates a fundamental principle of a free government, establishes separate interests in it, and lays a foundation for disaffection to rulers, and endless quarrels among the people.

HAPPY are the inhabitants of that common wealth, in which every man sits under his vine and fig-tree, having none to make him afraid — In which all are *protected*, but none *established!*

PERMIT me on this occasion to introduce the words of the Rev. Dr. Chauncy, whose age and experience add weight to his sentiments. "We are, says this gentleman, in principle against all civil establishments in religion.—We desire not, and suppose we have no right do desire, the interposition of the state to establish our sentiments in religion, or the manner in which we would express them—It does not indeed appear to us, that God has entrusted the state with a right to make religious establishments." And after observing, that if one state has this right, all states have the same right, he adds, "And as they must severally be supposed to exert this

authority

authority in eſtabliſhments conformable to their own ſentiments in religion; what can the conſequence be, but infinite damage to the cauſe of God and true religion? And ſuch in fact has been the conſequence of theſe eſtabliſhments in all ages, and in all places. What abſurdities in ſentiment, and ridiculous follies, not to ſay groſs immoralities, in practice, have not been eſtabliſhed by the civil power in ſome or other of the nations of the world? †

To which I take the liberty to add the following paſſage of a very ingenious author. * "The moment any religion becomes national, or eſtabliſhed, its purity muſt certainly be loſt, becauſe it is impoſſible to keep it unconnected with men's intereſts; and if connected, it muſt inevitably be perverted by them.—Again, That very order of men, who are maintained to ſupport its intereſts, will ſacrifice them to their own.—By degrees knaves will join them, fools believe them, and cowards be afraid of them; and having gained ſo conſiderable a part of the world to their intereſts, they will erect an independent dominion among themſelves, dangerous to the liberties of mankind; and repreſenting all thoſe who oppoſe their tyranny, as God's enemies, teach it to be meritorious in his ſight to perſecute them in this world, and damn them in another. Hence muſt ariſe Hierarchies, Inquiſitions and Popery; for popery is but the conſummation of

that

that tyranny which every religious syſtem in the hands of men is in perpetual purſuit of."

IT is well known to this reſpectable aſſembly, that chriſtianity flouriſhed remarkably for the ſpace of three hundred years after the aſcenſion of Chriſt, amidſt the hotteſt and moſt bloody perſecutions, and when the powers of the world were againſt it; and began to decline immediately upon its being made a *legal eſtabliſhment* by Conſtantine, the firſt chriſtian emperor. Who heaped upon it his ill-judged favors, and introduced a train of evils which he had not deſigned.

THE preachers of this divine religion were no ſooner taken into the favor of the prince, and their ſentiments eſtabliſhed by law, than they began to quarrel who ſhould be the greateſt; and anathematized one another.—Every man who has read the hiſtory of the four firſt general councils, is fully ſatisfied of the truth of theſe remarks.

SEEING then, chriſtianity made its way in the beginning, when the powers of the world were againſt it, let us chearfully leave it to the force of its own evidence, and to the care of its adorable author; while we ſtrictly attend to all thoſe means, which he hath inſtituted for the propagation of it. The miniſters of Chriſt are particularly called upon to *preach the word, to*

people *publicly, and from house to house*; always encouraging themselves with that gracious promise, *Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*

UPON the whole, I think it is a plain, as well as a very important truth, that the *church of Christ* and *a common-wealth are essentially different.* The one is a *religious* society, of which Christ is the sole head, and which he gathers out of the world, in common, by the dispensation of his gospel, governs by his laws in all matters of religion, a compleat code of which we have in the sacred scriptures; and preserves it by his power.

THE other is a *civil* society, originating with the people, and designed to promote their *temporal interests.* Which is governed by men whose authority is derived from their fellow-citizens, and confined to the affairs of this world.

IN this view of the matter, the line appears to me to be fairly drawn, between *the things that belong to Cæsar*, and *the things that belong to God.* The magistrate is to govern the *state*, and Christ is to govern the *church.* The former will find business enough in the complex affairs of government, to employ all his time and abilities. The latter is infinitely sufficient to manage his own kingdom without foreign aid.

THUS have I considered the important principles of civil and religious liberty, according to

that ability which God hath given; and with a freedom that becomes a citizen, when called upon, at a moſt critical period, to addreſs the Rulers of a free people: whoſe patriotic minds, it is taken for granted, would at once deſpiſe the language of adulation.

In order to compleat a ſyſtem of government, and to be conſiſtent with ourſelves, it appears to me that we ought to baniſh from among us that cruel practice, which has long prevailed, of reducing to a ſtate of ſlavery for life, the free-born Africans.*

The Deity hath beſtowed upon them and us the ſame natural rights as men; and hath aſſigned to them a part of the globe for their reſidence. But mankind, urged by thoſe paſſions which debaſe the human mind, have purſued them to their native country; and by fomenting wars among them, that they might ſecure the priſoners, or employing villains to decoy the unwary, have filled their ſhips with the unfortunate captives; dragged them from their tendereſt connections, and tranſported them to different parts of the earth,

* Congreſs early in the controverſy with Great-Britain, proteſted againſt the Slave-trade in the following reſolve:

Secondly. We will neither import nor purchaſe any ſlaves imported after the firſt day of December next; after which time we will *wholly diſcontinue the ſlave trade*; and will neither be concerned in it ourſelves, nor will we hire our veſſels, nor ſell our commodities or manufactures to thoſe who are concerned in it.

earth, to be hewers of wood, and drawers of water, till death ſhall end their painful captivity.

To reconcile this nefarious traffic with reaſon, humanity, religion, or the principles of a free government, in my view, requires an uncommon addreſs.

SHOULD we make the caſe our own, and act agreeable to that excellent rule of our bleſſed Lord, *whatever ye would that men ſhould do to you, do ye to them likewiſe*, the abolition of this diſgraceful practice would take place.

NOR can I conceive that we ſhall act a conſiſtent part, till we brand this ſpecies of tyranny with perpetual infamy. Shall we hold the ſword in one hand to defend our juſt rights as men; and graſp chains with the other to enſlave the inhabitants of Africa?—Forbid it heaven!—Forbid it all the free-born ſons of this weſtern world!——

MAY the year of jubilee ſoon arrive, when Africa ſhall caſt the look of gratitude to theſe happy regions, for the TOTAL EMANCIPATION of HER SONS!——

THIS matter, among others, deſerves the ſerious attention of our Honorable Rulers, in whom their fellow-citizens have repoſed uncommon confidence, which is apparent in calling

them forth to public ſervice at ſuch a difficult period as this; which undoubtedly calls for the united exertions of the greateſt abilities.

THE voice of the people is, as mentioned before, and the importance of the matter juſtifies the repetition of it, I ſay, the voice of the people is, that government ſhould pay their firſt attention to the war. If America is reſpectable in the field, the greater will be the proſpect of ſucceſs in arms, and of an honorable peace.

LET us not amuſe ourſelves with a proſpect of peace, and in conſequence thereof abate in our preparations for the war. If we ſhould, it may prove greatly injurious to *the freedom and glory of this* RISING EMPIRE.

BUT it is not for me to attempt to ſpecify the weighty affairs, which, during the courſe of the preſent year, and particularly of the preſent ſeſſion, are likely to come before the Honorable Gentlemen, who have this day called us to the place of public worſhip. God grant unto them that wiſdom that is from above!

WHILE tranſacting public buſineſs, may they remember, that Jehovah *ſtandeth in the congregation of the mighty; and judgeth among the gods.* Under the influence of this ſolemn conſideration, may the elections of this day be conducted. This being the caſe, every elector, before he gives his vote for any perſon to ſit in Council, will take

pains

pains to satisfy himself, whether he possesses the qualifications that are necessary for so exalted a station. Such as wisdom, virtue, firmness, and an unfeigned love of his country. Tried friends deserve the preference: An experience of whose capacity and fidelity in times past, recommends them as worthy of present confidence.

To the direction of unerring wisdom we commit both branches of the Honorable Court; heartily wishing that they may conduct themselves in every respect, as those who are to be accountable to God the judge of all. Thus will they enjoy the testimony of conscience, and may expect to be accepted of the multitude of their brethren.

In fine. Seeing the body of christians, however divided into sects and parties, "are entitled precisely to the same rights," it becomes them to rest contented with that equal condition, nor to wish for pre-eminence. Rather they should rejoice to see all men as free, and as happy as themselves.

They should study to imbibe more of the spirit of their divine Master, to love as brethren, and to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace. In the present state of ignorance and prejudice they cannot expect to see eye to eye. There will be a variety of opinions and modes of worship among the disciples of the same Lord; men equally honest, pious, and sensible, while they remain in this world of imperfection.

perfection. Let them therefore be faithful to their reſpective principles, and kind, and forbearing towards one another. Their chief ſtudy ſhould be to advance the cauſe of morality and religion in the world; and by their good works to glorify their Father who is in heaven.

THEY are to be ſubject to the civil magiſtrate, not only for wrath, but alſo for conſcience ſake; and to *pray for all who are in authority*, that *under them they may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godlineſs and honeſty. For this is good and acceptable in the ſight of God.* To whom be glory for ever.